

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed March 29, 2004, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. To further the prosecution of this application, Applicants have amended claims, canceled claims, and amended the specification. No new matter has been added.

Specification

In paragraph 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the specification because it did not reflect the current status of four parent applications. Applicants have amended the specification as requested. Accordingly, the objection to the specification should be withdrawn.

Applicants have further amended the specification to indicate that this application is a continuation-in-part of three additional applications that were pending at the time this application was filed. This benefit claim is timely under 35 CFR §1.78 because this application was filed before November 29, 2000. See 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii)(B).

Claims

The Office Action (at paragraph 6) indicated that each of claims 9, 21-25, and 44-47 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have amended each of claims 9, 21, 24, 44, and 47 to be in independent form and to include the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, each of claims 9, 21, 24, 44, and 47 should now be in allowable condition.

Each of the remaining claims depends from one of claims 9, 21, 24, 44 and 47, and thus should be allowable for at least the same reasons.

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CONCLUSION

A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if this communication does not place the case in condition for allowance.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicants hereby request any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,
Blackadar et al., Applicant(s)

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